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ENCLOSURE (1) 11A

NIE-40 - MERCHANT MARINE - TEXTUAL DESCRIPTION1. CONCLUSIONS

An analysis of the types of merchant vessels under construction in Western European shipyards in 1951 reveals a well-rounded program for the area as a whole as to types of vessels. West Germany and France appear to have a propensity for building freighters, 74 per cent of Swedish construction will be launched as tank vessels, and in Holland, a specialty has been developed and is being exploited in the construction of passenger vessels. Italy, too, has an apparent ability for the construction of passenger ships as well as combination passenger-cargo vessels. The end of World War II found Western European merchant fleets woefully lacking in tankers and passenger ships. With the bulk of world shipping concentrated in Great Britain and Western Europe in 1939, this area suffered particularly from the loss of merchant ships to enemy action.

Since the end of World War II, clearly distinguishable trends toward construction of larger, faster, and more powerful merchant vessels, particularly tankers, have dominated the shipbuilding scene in Western Europe. A factor, believed significant in itself, has been the shipbuilding policy of the Soviet Union, which has produced no significant program of merchant ship construction within her borders. Those vessels built for Russian account in foreign yards have been, for the most part, small freighters, particularly useful for inland waterways traffic and fishing.

With the exception of the German Democratic Republic, the Soviet bloc has experienced difficulty in acquiring diesel units in sufficient number for vessels built within the Communist orbit. Reports have been received that vessels built in Poland, for example, have required inordinate fitting out periods due to the lack of diesel units. In East Germany, however, it is believed that diesel engines, particularly in the lower horsepower, are being produced in significant quantities, but these units are being utilized in the fitting out of loggers and other small craft for the Soviet Union, as well as for the engining of fishing vessels for the East German fleet.

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